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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2007

In Today's Papers

TGS Chief General Buyukanit and General Saygun on the PKK
All papers give extensive coverage to the messages issued by Chief of the Turkish General Staff (TGS) General Buyukanit and his deputy General Saygun at a TGS symposium in Ankara yesterday. Liberal Radikal and mainstream Hurriyet headline with "Buyukanit: 'the PKK is legalized and has entered the Parliament.'" Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet says "Buyukanit criticized the DTP harshly and said that the PKK is in the parliament." Cumhuriyet reports that, speaking in a symposium organized by the TGS on 'Prevention of Economic and Ideological Support for the PKK/Kongra-Gel', General Buyukanit said "the PKK entered the parliament politically. The PKK not only became politicized but is also legalized. Acts that will encourage terrorist organizations should be avoided". General Buyukanit added that "since the beginning of the conflict with the PKK, Turkey has overlooked some important values of humanity like human rights, democracy, freedom and peace. The PKK gained support in the international arena by exploiting some of these values." When asked about his remarks that the PKK is now legalized, General Buyukanit said "I meant their part in parliament. They submit constitutional amendment proposals." Deputy Chief of General Staff General Ergin Saygun criticized the EU and said "Europe, which supports the PKK, shares the responsibility of Turkey's loss of lives and property."

"What are the generals saying?"

Fikret Bila commented in mainstream daily Milliyet: "The Generals once again declared to the public that some countries are applying a double standard when it comes to the fight against PKK terrorism. It is no secret that the US and EU are siding with us against the PKK only on a rhetorical basis, because they do not prevent financial and logistical support for the organization. It is also a known fact that these countries have a common goal regarding the future of the PKK issue: they tend to take steps to have Turkey sit and negotiate with the PKK on a political level. Both the US and EU consider Al Qaeda and related organizations as terrorists when terrorism is in question. Their interpretation of the global fight

against terror is limited only to those who harm them directly. From their perspective, the PKK is only a local and ethnic issue thus they are suggesting that Turkey work toward a political settlement. Given the current picture, neither the US and nor EU are acting in collaboration with their declaration of the PKK as a terror organization. Meanwhile, the PKK is using terror to impose its political goals upon Turkey while it does not face any counter deeds from the outside world."

"Ending Terror"

Ergun Babahan wrote in the mainstream daily Sabah: "Turkey has gained significant support and understanding in its fight against terrorism. In this current atmosphere, Turkey should be able to take every possible step for ending PKK terrorism. If a new law is required to attract PKK militants to come home, then the government should not hesitate to proceed. Turkey's southeast is in the process of transformation; politics through violence does not attract support from people. If political authority acts hesitantly when it comes to taking courageous steps, there will be consequences for generations to come. Turkey is paying a heavy price for the fact that Turkish political authorities have always been hesitant and overly cautious in taking steps and making the right decisions at proper times. The ruling AKP should be able to overcome the 'hawks hurdle' within the party."

The Opposition is against the Amnesty Law

In an interview with mainstream Sabah, main opposition party CHP leader Deniz Baykal said that issuance of a "Back to Home" law in the American style will not work since those who are on the mountains are there to conduct politics. Such a law would be a type of amnesty, which is part of the US plan for the region. The US is allowing Turkey to conduct point operations in Northern Iraq against

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the PKK, but on the other hand is telling the PKK not to take any action for the time being. This is not a mentality to end the PKK, on the contrary, it is a mentality to support the PKK's survival. The government seems to be resigned to this mentality." Liberal Radikal reports that opposition party MHP also criticized AKP on their policies for acting in line with US and EU recommendations.

New YOK President: "All bans will be lifted"

Hurriyet, Zaman, Milliyet, Sabah, Yeni Safak, Radikal and others: In his first message after undertaking the post of Higher Education Board (YOK) Presidency Prof. Yusuf Ziya Ozcan said that he will work to lift all bans in universities. He said "I have two visions: one is to lift all bans in universities and to attach priority to their main duty, which is science."

Karen Hughes: "We will re-gain Turks' hearts"

Sabah, Zaman, Aksam, Yeni Safak: US State Department Undersecretary for Public Diplomacy Karen Hughes said that the US will start a series of programs to re-gain the hearts of Turks.

TV Highlights

NTV

Domestic News

Diyarbakir prosecutor demands two-year prison sentences for 54 DTP mayors who held a press conference to voice allegations that PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan was poisoned in jail.

Transport Minister Binali Yildirim has declined to provide an explanation of the crash of an Atlas Jet plane near Isparta which killed 57 people.

The captain of the boat that sank this week near Seferihisar handed over the control of the boat to one of the migrants. Of the 85 illegal immigrants on the boat, six survived, 43 perished, and 36 remain missing.

International News

After a long absence, Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani yesterday appeared before the media and said that the Kurds were not planning to set up an independent state.

A Lebanese presidential election scheduled for Tuesday was postponed until next Monday, December 17.

67 people died and 60 others injured when two car bombs exploded in Algeria's capital Algiers.

WILSON